

ANNUAL REPORT

2021 - 2022

INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP for generations to come



Ontario Native Women's Association

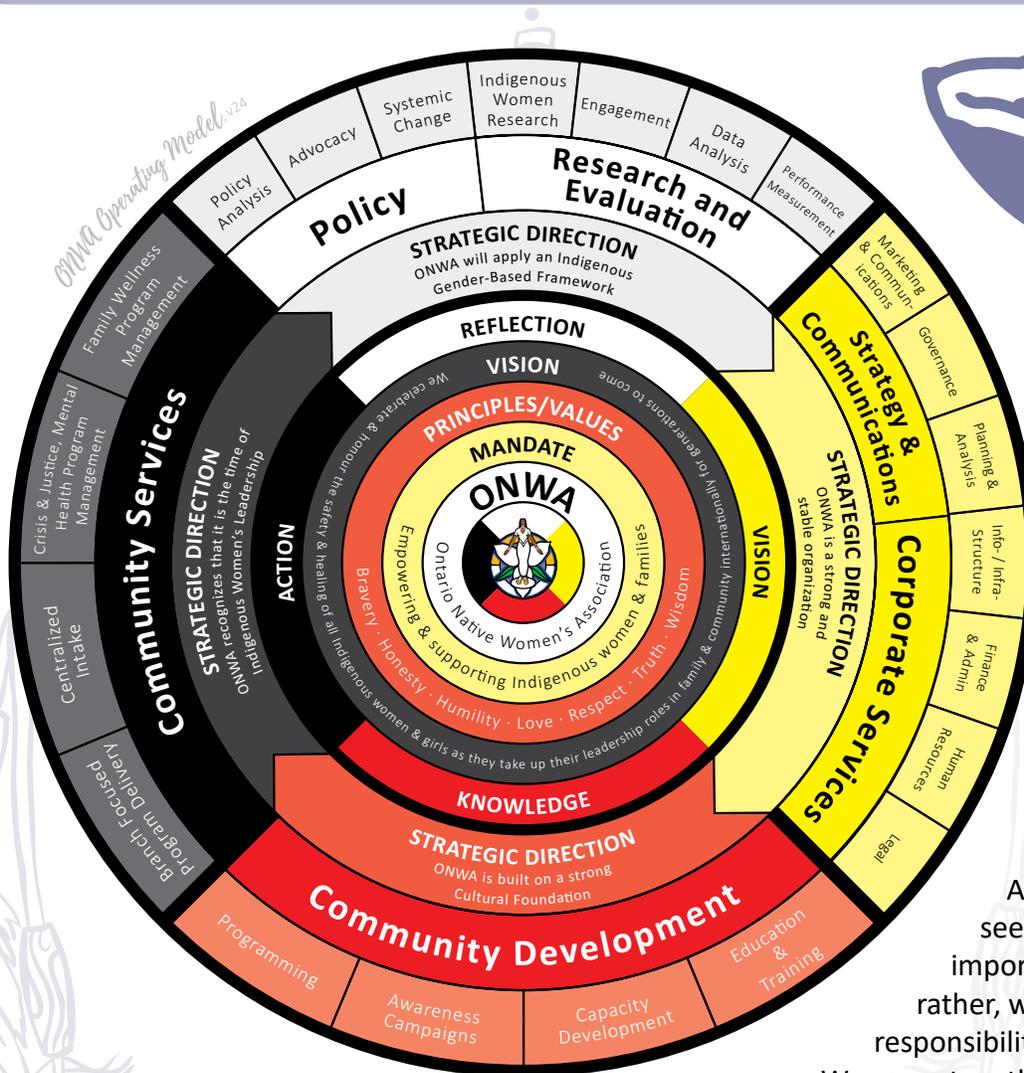
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Organizational Structure

Vision

At the Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA), we celebrate and honour the safety and healing of Indigenous women and girls as they take up their leadership roles in the family, community, provincially, nationally, and internationally for generations to come.



Operating Model

At ONWA, we do not see one person as more important than the other, but rather, we focus on each of our responsibilities as part of the whole.

We come together in unity and work towards one vision.

ONWA's Operating Model (left) places women at the centre surrounded by our vision, principles, and mandate. Four key portfolios encompass four key goals for our strategic picture to empower Indigenous women's leadership.

President's Message

In this last year as President of the Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA), I reflect on the work that has been done to support the lives of Indigenous women and their families.

A tremendous effort has been put forth by the Board of Directors, Executive Director, and Staff of ONWA to ensure Indigenous women's safety and this makes me very proud of the work we have done.

Organizationally, it is our honour to be able to serve Indigenous women in our advocacy efforts for systems change and to be able to develop effective programming that helps them where they are at.

Indigenous women are the backbone of their families, communities, and nations and at ONWA, we know this to be true. It is important to point out that those Indigenous women are working through their trauma, they are raising their children, caring for their family, and protecting their communities as best they can.

In my work as an Aboriginal Shelter Director, I know that Indigenous women's lived experience can be a violent experience, for herself and her children. Leaving homes and communities to find safety for themselves and their children is a common theme in the work I see. Rebuilding their lives in communities that are not of their own is a hard task but one they are committed to.

The impacts of oppression and colonization are present in our everyday systems and Indigenous women continue to navigate these waters because they must. Indigenous women's reality continues to intersect with multiple systems such as justice, child welfare, health, and education. The socio-economic issues are complex, and the needs are many. I applaud the women who work so hard to make safety a priority for themselves and their children.



This is Indigenous women's work, we focus on supporting Indigenous women and their families, knowing that if Indigenous women are well, everyone else will be well, and she will make sure that they are. It is who we are and who we will continue to be. ONWA strives to advocate for core funding for Indigenous women's organizations to ensure services are developed for and by Indigenous women. WE will continue to advocate for Indigenous women's voices to be heard so that we can affect change for generations to come.

Debra Vermette

Debra Vermette
President



Executive Director's Message

It has been another year of great strides towards our goal of becoming a Centre of Excellence for Indigenous women. We recognize that the impact of having to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic has been difficult on all of us, and we want to recognize each and everyone of you as helpers in the community. You have continued to support not only your family and loved ones but also your community. We hope that each one of you make time to stop and take care for yourself. We also want you to be proud of the impact you have made because we are. We have continually been reminded that we must put great importance on caring for ourselves. Without our health and well being, we cannot continue to do the critical work in our communities.

At ONWA we have embraced the teachings of the 4 Agreements and the work we have done based on the teaching of "Always do your best" recognizing that the pandemic has exhausted us all, yet we have all continued to do our best and we have continued to support Indigenous women and their families.

When we as helpers are walking our healing journey, we begin to take up our leadership roles based on who we are as Indigenous women and no longer allow colonized ways of being "the right way" or the "only way".

Indigenous women's leadership is needed now more than ever, we continue to face an enormous amount of crisis in our communities from increased mental health issues, addiction crisis, housing and homelessness to the destruction of Mother Earth. The issues we are facing are extremely complex and can be overwhelming when trying to do this work alone. That is why we need work together, as Indigenous women always have and in community so that we can continue to unpack one issue at a time. Turning the issues that Indigenous women face into actionable change for our grandchildren's grandchildren is the path we are on with our new Strategic Plan.



Our priorities continue to be focused on healing at an individual, family, community, and nation level as we know that this is how we will restore balance. Our advocacy will be focused on addressing the systemic racism and discrimination that Indigenous women continue to face in numerous systems that are supposed to be there to support them including in health care, child welfare, justice, housing, education/training and social assistance systems.

Our new Strategic Plan envisions our work for the next 10 years based on the wisdom, knowledge and courage of our membership and Indigenous women who continue to tell us their truth and their solutions to the issues they face. Our plan will allow us to continue amplifying Indigenous women's stories and truth, take care of Mother Earth, be a Centre of Excellence for Indigenous women and to build a stronger ONWA for the future so that our grandchildren's grandchildren will always have a safe space, their voice amplified and equality in Ontario.

Cora McGuire-Cyrette

Cora McGuire-Cyrette
Executive Director

A Year in Review

Over the last 50 years, ONWA has been a leader in Indigenous women's rights, Indigenous women's access to culturally relevant programming and policy, as well as Indigenous women's leadership. ONWA has been pivotal in bringing forward Indigenous women's concerns, such as discriminatory legislation and policies that have negatively impacted Indigenous women, their children, and their communities. Throughout the last 5 decades, ONWA was at the forefront of research led by Indigenous women on the issues we face and contributed to a vast number of best practices, Indigenous methodologies, data, and knowledge base.

ONWA has been 100% committed to empowering Indigenous women, and our work will continue with that commitment for the decades to come. ONWA is grateful for all the work that Indigenous women accomplished before us, they built a

51 Programs

58K 58,193 Program Participants

95K 95,192 Direct 1:1 Services for Community Members

200K 200,465 Total Community Impact



strong foundation that allows us to continue the forward momentum they began.

We have heard from Indigenous women that they are still not safe, do not have safe spaces and that it is crucial for ONWA to continue working towards our objective of every Indigenous woman being safe in their homes, communities, territories, and all throughout Turtle Island. We will continue to utilize the stories and knowledge of Indigenous women as we move forward in our work, because we know that Indigenous women being safe and well is the solution to many of the problems Indigenous communities are still struggling with. To undo the colonial practices and ways that have been forced upon us for hundreds of years, we must return to Indigenous women's knowledge, wisdom, and healing. We must return to our teachings, ceremonies and culture, because when we do this, we will heal ourselves, and when Indigenous women are well, families and communities are also well.

As we move forward in our journey we will continue to state loudly and clearly that Indigenous women are the experts in their own narrative and lives. We will remain true to our values of Reclaiming, Restoring, Reconciling and Recognizing.

As we work towards our 10-year Strategic Plan with the overarching goals of ONWA becoming a Centre of Excellence for Indigenous women we ensure that we continue to be built on a strong cultural foundation. We understand that to be a national leader and to make real systemic change for Indigenous women, we will always begin with ceremony. In doing so, we will demonstrate the strength of our culture and continue the healing and wellness that ceremony has brought to Indigenous women for thousands of years.

We will use those teachings and wisdom to heal the harms against Mother Earth. Indigenous women understand the responsibility needed to protect the air, land, and water. Indigenous women in our role as life givers continue to pass this knowledge our ancestors gave to us, to the next generation so they can take up their leadership roles and follow the guidance

RECLAIM

Indigenous women's role as matriarchs (leadership) in their families and communities.

RESTORE

Indigenous women's identity and inherent rights beyond a jurisdictional approach.

RECONCILE

relationships to ensure that Indigenous women have a right to safety regardless of location.

RECOGNIZE

that Indigenous women are the medicine needed to heal ourselves, families, and communities.

our ancestors gave to our mothers, aunties, and grandmothers. We will continue the work to expand ONWA's capacity but also other Indigenous women's organization's capacity, because we know that collectively we are stronger. We will strive to reduce lateral violence as we know this is a root cause of the colonial oppression we have suffered and are still suffering.

We will use our collective teachings to mentor young Indigenous women to take their rightful place as leaders in our community and society. By doing so, we will pass Indigenous women's responsibility to the next generation so that they can continue the work for their grandchildren's grandchildren.



ONWA programming success

Indigenous women’s programming needs, continued to increase throughout the pandemic, as violence against Indigenous women increased across Ontario and Turtle Island. Over the last year we continued to reach out to communities, our membership (Chapters and Councils) to hear what Indigenous women’s needs are in the different regions of the province. In following our four agreements, we always tried to do our best to respond to the needs of Indigenous women across Ontario.

We consistently heard that housing supports remained a challenge as most affordable housing was not accessible in the GTA but also in the eastern and western regions of the province. We seen housing costs increase in the northern parts as well, with increased need and less supply, especially for Indigenous women. Mental health and addictions issues were ever present and increasing for many communities, and Indigenous women were impacted both directly and indirectly from a lack of mental health supports for themselves or their children, plus addiction treatment had increasingly longer than normal wait-lists which lengthened the time with respect to access over the last year.

Child Welfare was also ever present to many of the Indigenous women we spoke with, our membership and councils regarding how their children were still being removed at high rates, that they were still feeling unable to access supports or ask for crisis supports in fear of being reported to a child welfare agency and having their children removed from their care. We heard there was still concern with not enough Indigenous women’s organizations giving feedback into the child welfare redesign, that being an Indigenous woman and the impacts that child welfare has had on Indigenous women, seemed to be completely missing from the current policy framework.

Although we heard many disheartening stories, we also heard stories of leadership, peer support, unique solutions, and wisdom from many of the Indigenous women we engaged, and our membership engaged. As a long-standing practice at ONWA we continue to meet Indigenous women where they are at, working to provide them the programming needs they require to heal and take leadership roles in healing their communities. ONWA continues to take the teachings from those who have led the way in empowering Indigenous women and their families to continue to do Indigenous women’s work, learning as we go and sharing what we have learned with those around us.



Mindimooyenh Health Clinic

The Mindimooyenh Health Clinic provides culturally safe access to Covid-19 vaccines, flu vaccinations, traditional medicines, and land-based healing supports. Critical to the clinic's success is the ability to meet the Indigenous population where they are at and provide services that fit their schedules. It has also been essential in ensuring that the Indigenous population remain a priority in receiving booster doses and youth and pediatric vaccines. Ensuring that all family and household members have access to the vaccines were a key focus for the health clinic to protect Indigenous families and communities.

In addition to providing vaccine and health supports, a provincial media campaign was launched to address vaccine hesitancy associated with booster doses. The Mindimooyenh Health team provided training and guidance to ONWA staff and chapters regarding PPE and rapid testing. A provincial vaccine navigation and registration line was added to support the health clinic and improve access to vaccines, answer questions about the vaccine and help community members navigate health services.

100

COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics

12K

12,207
Vaccinated individuals

3K

3,450
Health Supports provided to community members

32.5K

Rapid test kits provided to Chapters, Councils, ONWA Sites and Indigenous community partners

10

Rapid test drive through blitzes in Thunder Bay

She is Wise Framework

ONWA's She is Wise Framework is a collective relational space where Indigenous women's specific knowledges and practices are gathered and shared to inform ONWA's programs, services, research, methodologies, and evaluation practices. These are the wise practices that Indigenous women have been using to create safe spaces for themselves and their families, communities, and nations for generations. An important aspect of this concept is relationship-building, rooted in healing and grounded in healthy, safe Indigenous lifeways of knowing, being, and achieving our roles and leadership responsibilities as Indigenous women. The collective space—created by ONWA through programs, gatherings, and summits—is where Indigenous women share their life journeys that has laid the foundational knowledge that has informed the She is Wise Framework. This knowledge is shared in ceremony, storytelling, story sharing, feasts, gatherings, and other traditional engagements.

Three areas of work that are guided by the framework:



She is Wise Conference

The 2021 She is Wise conference was held virtually on March 15 to 18, 2021 and conference theme was Land, Healing and Medicine. There were over 500 hundred participants over the three days. Conference participants were representative of front-line service providers, Indigenous women service organizations and community members.

The speakers for the event were Sheila Watt-Cloutier, Dr. Patricia McGuire, Mariea and Teedly Linklater, Tanya Talaga and Autumn Peltier. Highlighted activities included, an art therapy activity, a presentation on ONWA's She is Wise Sexual Violence Project, film screenings of "Water Walker" and "Rumble: The Indians Who Rocked the World" documentary hosted by Stevie Salas, and a performance by Pura Fe. Another key highlight of the conference was an Elders Panel comprised of Sheila Watt Cloutier, Judy DaSilva, and Mariea Linklater, who focused on teachings on the land, land-based healing, and protecting Mother Earth. The Elders also spoke on violence against Indigenous women and how the land can



support Indigenous women's healing and mental health and wellness.

Overall, participants spoke to the need for the SIW Conference as an annual training activity for professional development and that even though the conference was virtual, they still felt connected and enjoyed the conference.

She Is Wise Research Project

ONWA's She is Wise Sexual Violence Research Project is now in year four. The project continues to search for wise practices that support communities, agencies, and organizations to address sexual violence against Indigenous women. The research team continues to meet with the project advisory committee that guides and supports this work. The Advisory committee is comprised of Indigenous women who work and understand the issue of sexual violence.

Critical to the project is the continued need to hear and understand Indigenous women's voices in relation to sexual violence. In doing so, we listen and follow the direction that is needed to effectively make change for generations to come.

The Sexual Violence Research Project will focus on supporting Indigenous women role models and community projects that will feed into a blueprint for wise practices that support Indigenous women's experiences around sexual violence.

She Is Wise Magazine

In the past three years, the She Is Wise magazine has become the number one publication in Canada uplifting Indigenous women's voices and sharing their stories. The goal of the magazine is to create a safe space for Indigenous women's stories that reflect the truth of their lives and experiences. Key to the work is the celebration of Indigenous women's worldview, sharing perspectives that utilize a critical lens on making change for themselves, their families and for generations to follow. These are the stories we want for our children's children to tell their

children. That is the impact of Indigenous women's storytelling and how impactful it can be.

The magazine is bi-annual and distributed to all First Nations, friendship centers, health centers nationally as well as ONWA's internal database and mailing list. With over 4,000 copies distributed each issue, it has become the go-to resource for many women's organizations across Canada. MediaEdge actively send PDFs to teachers and educators looking to share articles for their use. The digital version is growing exponentially, with views growing each issue. This, combined with MediaEdge's long-held relationships to supporters and advertisers has helped She Is Wise grow into a respected resource on Indigenous women's issues.



NEW! Edition 6: 2022 Spring/Summer
**Cindy Blackstock: A champion for
Indigenous children**

READ OR SUBSCRIBE AT:

www.onwa.ca/she-is-wise-magazine

Community Services

"I was really praying. Thank you for making our dreams come true. This really motivates me in the future to stay on track with my education & personal life goals."

"Thank you so much for coming with me today - I couldn't have done it without you!!! Appreciate all your help. The world needs more people like you :)"

Over the past year, Community Services shifted focus to advance health equality and wellbeing in the social determinants of health for Indigenous women, their families, and community. Priority was to increase safety, ensure the creation of safe spaces at all ONWA sites, immediate access to intake, referral, and service provision, and to expand service delivery across the province in collaboration with our 11 Chapter Organizations. Our portfolio used a hybrid model of both in-person and virtual platforms. This approach allowed for a continued larger province reach to receive services, traditional healing, prevention, early intervention, and traditional medicines, guidance, and ceremonies.

"I just wanted to express my gratitude for all the help from ONWA. We were so overwhelmed and just wanted to say thanks for everything. My kids and I appreciate everything the agency has done for us more than words can describe. Sending warm love & tons of thanks."



78K

77,943

Intake Services Provided

1.7K

1,716

Addiction Treatment Services attended by Community Members

2K

2,145

Advocacy within Justice, Sexual Assault, & Domestic Violence Sectors

316

Successful Human Trafficking Exits of Indigenous women and youth

5.8K

5,810

Street-Based Contracts through Human Trafficking Outreach Services



Centralized Intake

The success of the Centralized Intake Program continued into the 2021-22 fiscal year. As ONWA pivoted and adapted our services into the 2nd year of the COVID-19 pandemic, we were able to create a stronger provincial reach with immediate accessibility to services. This highlights a 20% increase per month in intake requests for service provision.

The Intake team has expanded to meet overall provincial needs and is trained to provide system navigation, urgent crisis expertise, and in the moment trauma-informed, culturally grounded holistic services. Immediate, safety planning, and prevention services remained a high request area that included priority human trafficking response services, electronic devices & connection to internet, 9,375 vaccination appointments booked with the vulnerable population, 11,689 Go-Bags for food security and PPE, 305 prevention hampers, and 548 cultural interventions. Through one-time specialized funding, this program also provided 249 rental arrears supports and 250 harm reduction kits to community members.

“Thank you so VERY much!!! Your team will never understand how much stress you guys have relieved for my family and me. Please give my thanks to EVERYONE!! I am super proud to be part of this community!!”

Dew Drop-In Community Kitchen Outreach

“ONWA saved my life! I know for certain that I could have not done this without ONWA’s amazing workers who go over and beyond. So much love and respect for the work you do!”

“It is honestly a relief that any money we get in the future, can be spent on our kid’s needs. I want to save up for the future to get a car or even a long shot be a homeowner (that’s my future dream) but I cannot thank you & the organization enough for helping us.”

“I was really praying. Thank you for making our dreams come true. This really motivates me in the future to stay on track with my education & personal life goals.”

29K

28,904

Immediate Services

39K

38,709

Brief Services

8K

7,773

Short/Long-Term Case Management



Courage for Change

The program continues to support Indigenous women and youth to exit human trafficking (HT) or sexual exploitation. The program was expanded to 11 ONWA Sites and Chapter Organizations; this has created a network of immediate support services, exit strategies, and intensive case management to communities across Ontario. The program has successfully assisted Indigenous women and youth to exit HT. Provincially, the program provided street-based outreach services to Indigenous women and youth. Intensive case management includes preparation and support to Indigenous women to access addiction treatment services and healing lodges. The team has also assisted Indigenous women to navigate the criminal, sexual and domestic court systems, this led to support being given to families in reunifications after exploitation and to obtain independent housing. As the program continues to adapt to the changing needs of the community, the Courage for Change Program will remain as a beacon to assist Indigenous women and youth to navigate complex systems, connection to culture, and to increase the overall safety for Indigenous women and youth.

“I struggled immensely with addictions for 20 years. I was homeless and couchsurfing and ‘did what I had to do to make ends meet’. At times I was unrecognizable. Many discussions about treatment occurred, but I didn’t think that was what I needed.

Then almost a year ago, I called and said it was time for a change. My life has changed, and today I am doing amazing! I just needed consistency, empowerment, and someone to believe in my worth.

Miigwech ONWA.

Babaamendam - Trauma-Informed

The program assists community members to navigate various systems by working directly with Indigenous women and their families to access cultural healing, supports, and wellness across the province. The program supported families with child welfare involvement that included advocacy, early intervention, and prevention services, this gave way to successfully support reunification plans.

Provincially, the program delivered 176 Indigenous specific sessions that supported 855 participants to attend traditional programming. The Babaamendam Program has supported over 220 safety plans, this shows an increase of 84% in requests for services. The program will adapt to meet the needs of community members with the goal to increase safe spaces for Indigenous women and their families to begin their healing journey.

Mental Health & Wellness

The program supported community by providing both in-person and virtual individual and group therapy using our Day Treatment Model and 2

“I am thankful for the ongoing support ONWA provides to me. ONWA has been here for my family and I, and it means a lot to me.”

“So many thanks for your kindness and support, smudging, prayers, Traditional Medicines, food, referrals to, and safety planning for our family during our crisis, trauma, and grief and loss.”

- Community Member - After-hours Call.

Eye-Seeing Approach. This paradigm focuses on culture being the foundation of all the work we do and then to pull in western practices that will complement the community members healing journey. Local programming included ceremony, cultural teachings, positive coping strategies, grief and loss, addictions, aftercare, healthy relationships, parenting, isolation, and codependency; these are all part of the multi-disciplinary approach used within the Day Treatment Model. Ideally, we want to keep intact the community members' support system while building on their identity connection and self-location.

The program has seen a 35% increase in prevention-based services and a 78% increase in Indigenous women requests to access addiction treatment services. The program also provided specialized group sessions to participants that focused on anxiety, depression, and cultural intervention techniques. This year, we celebrated our first annual "Culture is Wellness" week. This initiative brought together local Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and mental health experts that supported over 2,000 participants to virtually join community learning and engagement strategies that reflected how "culture is wellness".

Land-Based Healing

The program builds on cultural healing and community connectedness. Elders and Knowledge Keepers provide guidance on ceremony, teachings, and interventions using land and cultural camps to support individual, family, and community-based healing practices. Family members are encouraged to begin their healing journey by attending programming together as a whole family unit.

With unmarked children graves continuing to be found across Canada that were connected to the Residential School System's oppression,



"I feel literally like I have landed in a part of heaven." – Community Member preparing to attend addictions treatment

racism, and attempted genocide of Indigenous people, now more than ever we need to support community's access to healing. Indigenous women and their families have felt the heaviness of having to lead reclamation, decolonization of unhealthy practices and coping, and the re-learning of the true 'herstory' of Canada. The Land-Based Healing Program facilitates sessions throughout the four seasons to foster Indigenous ways of being, knowing, and re-claiming. Of importance, is participating, protecting, and encouraging the healing of Mother Earth and the water, medicine, and agricultural teachings she provides. Community members participated in over 4,000 land-based events using both in-person and virtual platforms. Cultural programming included bear fat rendering, hide camps, hunting and trapping, medicine harvesting, and ceremonies. This program is an integral connection to the service delivery provided by Community Services.



Hide Tanning



Wild Rice Harvesting and Teachings



“Thanks to the ‘strong women’ I spoke with today. Everyone was kind, caring and empathetic. It made a difference in my day just knowing that someone listened to me.”

Community Wellness

The program supports Indigenous women and their families in Thunder Bay and Kenora areas to navigate domestic violence sectors. The program supported a 62% increase in intake and brief services. With domestic violence statistics continuing to rise, this program focuses on awareness, safety, and creating safe spaces for Indigenous women to connect, share, and receive service delivery.

The Community Wellness program provided specialized workshops ranging from capacity and support building to addressing trauma. The community wellness team continues to meet the needs of community by offering culturally safe 1:1 peer counselling, brief therapy, and providing community-based cultural programming.

Education Resource Development

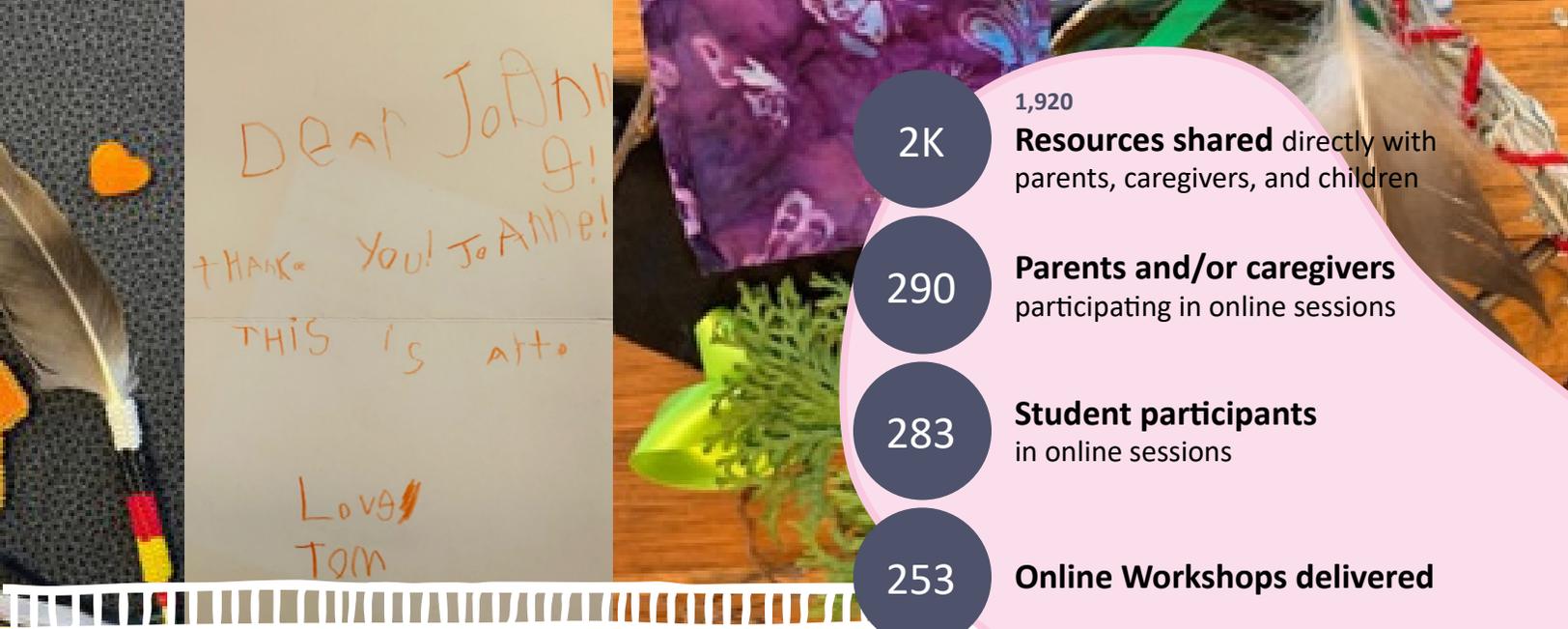
The program provided resources and learning tools to participants using a virtual platform. Participants received educational supports

for children and youth from grades junior kindergarten through to grade 12. The program aims to decolonize current education practices by incorporating Indigenous ways of thinking and re-learning. The program ensures that participants are supported and met where they are at in their level of learning; while caregivers are provided with tools to support their children and youth to gain higher learning through culture, teachings and re-claiming cultural worldviews and knowledge.

This Ministry of Education funding is in place until January 2023, we will continue to advocate for this program to continue as it has been successful in delivering culturally relevant supports to parents and students.

Gladue Writer, Bail & Aftercare

Gladue Writers and Aftercare Case Workers were able to establish healing and release plans to empower individuals navigating the criminal justice system. Gladue staff provided electronic devices to Indigenous women and girls to support them to appear in court virtually, to conduct Gladue reports and bail letter interviews, and to increase safety planning when released. This program successfully launched the Gladue Bail Letter Program in 2021. This is the first bail



2K

1,920

Resources shared directly with parents, caregivers, and children

290

Parents and/or caregivers participating in online sessions

283

Student participants in online sessions

253

Online Workshops delivered

program across Canada to culturally conduct bail release plans specifically for Indigenous accused women and girls. The program eliminated 485.5 custody days and saved 730 days of driving prohibitions which was a significant cost savings. The program identified 3 out of 4 Gladue reports completed resulted in community sentencing. Over 90% of the individuals who received Gladue supports have experience with Residential Schools, child welfare, and the Sixties Scoop. There were also formal Gladue training sessions put on by the Gladue Justice Coordinator to lawyers, judges, service providers, government organizations, and police services. This training highlighted the over-representation of Indigenous women and youth in the justice system and the lack of reform to utilize Gladue reports and letters as a tool to decolonize the justice system.

“Thank you ONWA and Creator! I would never have reached this benchmark without you! My greatest thanks for everything you are doing for people that are on the brink! The work you are doing is so important and is simply saving lives, day after day.”

“This program has helped me and my children so much in such a short period of time. I do not know what I would have done or where I would be without the support.”

“I could have not made it this far without the support I have received. Having support to navigate the justice system has been such a relief.”

“I really enjoyed watching the kids be creative and having other women’s company through the tough times we live in.” K.H.

Indigenous Healthy Baby Healthy Children

The Indigenous Healthy Baby Healthy Children (IHBHC) Program engaged with families throughout the province providing a range of services fostering traditional parenting roles. Provincial connections and partnerships continue to enhance the services provided and resulted in a 164% increase in prevention-based services with 901 cultural interventions provided

to Indigenous women. The IHBHC program continues to support Indigenous mothers from prenatal support to age 6. Provincial partnerships continue to create true wrap-around supports for new mothers focusing on culture, health, safety, and stability for families through direct services and workshops.

Family Violence Training

Customized Family Violence Training was provided to all front-line staff in November 2021. Community Services registered 30 staff to support capacity building, program development, and an opportunity to refine their skills through this in-depth training. Topics included how we examine different forms of violence within family relationships, including psychological, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse. Assessment areas were explored to help understand the impacts of violence on individuals, relationships, and communities as well as intervention strategies to support working with survivors of violence and with those who perpetrate violence. This training equipped front-end staff to have the knowledge, resources, and skills to support community members that may be experiencing violence within the family system.

Indigenous Victim and Family (IVFL)

The program walks with Indigenous women and their families to ensure services are trauma-informed and culturally relevant within systems that are historically oppressive to Indigenous victims. The program focuses on creating stability so Indigenous women can begin their healing paths through culture and ceremony. The IVFL Program has supported a significant 67% increase in domestic violence in the past year. Community members continuously express their thanks for the wrap-around supports that ONWA provided to ensure the safety and wellbeing of Indigenous woman and her family.

Nihdawin

Nihdawin 'My Place' program operates in Thunder Bay and is a highly successful housing and homelessness program that follows an "Indigenous Housing First" model to end homelessness for Indigenous women, girls, and

their families. Throughout 2021-22, our program has supported community members in securing safe, affordable housing. Nihdawin welcomed a new Addiction Navigator position to support healing concepts and to build addiction services within the program. Specifically, the position supports Indigenous women and youth to access addiction treatment services who are at risk of eviction, currently homeless, and/or precariously housed that are experiencing substance misuse issues. The Addiction Navigator has supported community members in attending addiction treatment and treatment extensions. The Nihdawin program supported families with child welfare reunification after gaining sustainable housing.

There were 2,774 advocacy contacts provided to Indigenous women experiencing chronic or episodic homelessness. By providing access to safe affordable housing and supportive addiction treatment options, we have made a significant impact in the underhoused crisis occurring in Thunder Bay.

Youth in Transition, Housing, & Anti-Human Trafficking

The Youth in Transition, Youth in Transition Housing, and the Youth in Transition Anti-Human Trafficking (YIT) Programs continued to support youth 16 to 24 years in Thunder Bay, Sioux Lookout, and Toronto. The YIT program has seen a 78% increase in prevention-based services and a 69% increase in intakes and brief services. 84% of youth in the program that participated in cultural interventions effectively guiding youth to improve outcomes, build cultural capacity, and create new connections within the community.

The YIT program supported youth through culture, housing, immediate and crisis supports, education, and training to create independence and life skills. Youth were connected to Elders and Knowledge Keepers, this has assisted in reclamation of Indigenous identity and



Sexual Assault Centre Networking

“Having someone I can trust and talk to has made a difference in my healing journey.”



connecting to their self-location. This program has successfully been able to introduce youth to land-based services and ceremony to align with rites of passage needed to enter in adult sphere of the lifecycle.

Youth Cultural Intervention

The program supports youth who are at risk of, involved in, and released from the justice system in Thunder Bay. This new program supports youth through referrals, discharge planning, and to re-claim and re-learn cultural knowledge. The program began in 2021, creating a network of partnerships developed to provide wrap-around supports, service, and guidance to youth in attaining their goals and growth on their personal healing journey. Cultural programming encompasses the four quadrants of a balanced lifestyle and personal well-being and will continue to adapt as the needs of the youth change. The program goal supports youth post-justice involvement to reduce recidivism. This program has facilitated 3 land-based cultural programs, that focused on building cultural identity formation and self-location.

It didn't sink in until much later as to what I had heard, when my wife asked me what the phone call was about, that was when it hit me that our application was indeed approved. We are overjoyed and very much appreciative for your organization's generosity. I cannot tell you enough how much we are thankful for this. This has propelled us in establishing a fresh start for our family and will secure a safe environment for our new baby's arrival.

Thank you for your support I feel so much more confident in speaking up on issues that concern me and my family, I feel empowered! I was homeless, my children were in care but after being open 7 months, I'm now housed, children in my care, I addressed legal, child welfare and housing barriers. Now I can deal with my historical trauma, complex issues, and barriers.

Feeling grateful today for your help. It feels unreal. I can't explain how lovely it feels to finally have a home and nice things to call our own thanks to you & the Organization. I will tell my children the good news when they get home from school. They will be truly happy. Thanks so much for everything and all the support & help.

Signed,

One Happy Mom & Kids

“You were here for me when no one else was. It's the little things that make a big difference.”



Community Development

The Community Development portfolio is responsible for building capacity in communities and service organizations through education and awareness building activities that are reflective of Indigenous women's needs and approaches. ONWA is committed to serving Indigenous women in community and this portfolio is responsible for our work to support our membership that is located throughout the province of Ontario. Our membership is the foundation of our organization, and we continue to build partnerships and support the critical work they do in community. Recognizing and reclaiming Indigenous women's leadership roles in our communities is essential to building community's response to issues Indigenous women face in their lives. Key focus areas of this portfolio include community safety, health, Indigenous Women's Leadership and Ending

40K

39,689
Campaign Reach
from 27 Campaigns

19K

Community Events
19,176 participants
at 857 events

18K

Workshops
17,737 participants
at 1,160 workshops

2K

2,234
Capacity Building Activities

16K

Traditional Activities
16,090 participants
at 1,278 activities

6K

6,206
Resources Provided

1K

Community Events
1,185 participants
at 69 meeting

67

Resources Developed

17K

17,249
Direct 1:1 Services
for Community Members

252

Program Partners



Violence Against Indigenous Women. This past year, Community Development has continued to utilize virtual platforms in our service delivery approach but have been able to meet in person for smaller group projects. We look forward to increased in-person training events as we know the importance of connections and place in all the work we do. The following is a celebration of this past year’s activities and events that have supported Indigenous women across Ontario.

Community Safety Community Safety

The program aims to provide culturally relevant supports for Indigenous women currently entrenched in, as well as survivors of, gang involvement. The program’s framework is rooted in a cross-sectional wrap around approach that recognizes the interconnectedness of gangs, human trafficking, the justice system, and the restoration of the family through the empowerment of Indigenous women. In addition to direct supports, the program also works to increase service provider and community capacity on pathways to gang life and best practices for supporting survivors.

The program was able to provide Indigenous Gang Awareness and Intersectionality training to 375 participants that included government, frontline workers, and community members. Additionally, the Community Safety Liaison was able to increase capacity, both internally and externally, of 71 front line workers in both crisis intervention and harm reduction in supporting survivors and those who are gang entrenched.

6K

5,669

Individuals who received training, education & awareness activities

289

Survivors engaged and supported

“Such a powerful statement about the correlation between land exploitation and human exploitation! Totally agree!”

“This work is so deep and captures the experience of Targeted people.”

Indigenous Anti-Human Trafficking (IAHTL)

The IAHTL program continues to build capacity and provide resource supports to organizations, service providers and community in the prevention of human trafficking. The program is delivered from an Indigenous lens that amplifies the voices of survivors and roots their knowledge through culture to support them in reclaiming their roles as leaders in community safety.

Throughout the pandemic, the IAHTL program continued to support the Mindemooyenh Vaccination Clinic with aftercare and mental health supports. The program expanded with the addition of two mental health and addiction support positions. These services will increase the capacity of the IAHTL program through continued survivor support, capacity building and resource development to our staff, membership, and community partners to increase Indigenous women’s safety.

The program was invited to speak in partnership with Western University’s Learning Network where there was over 1,800 participants.

Mental Health and Addiction Indigenous Anti-Human Trafficking

The program connects to ONWA's overall community safety goal of "Indigenous women have a right to safety for themselves and their families" by ensuring that all initiatives, services, programs, and interventions for Indigenous Human Trafficking (HT) Survivors are based on an Indigenous cultural gender-based trauma-informed lens. The Mental Health program supports, and education are available to HT survivors regardless of age or status, and inclusive of Two-Spirit/Transgender individuals.

The program staff have been developing specialized culturally appropriate mental health and addiction materials, presentations, and curriculum as it relates to ending Indigenous Human Trafficking. Community presentations have been delivered to frontline workers and organizations with a cross sectoral approach from community-based programming, health, education, and judicial systems. Using an Indigenous Lens, the Mental Health and Addiction resources have been developed for Indigenous women, girls, two spirit people and their families as it relates to raising awareness and ending Human Trafficking in Ontario.

Following one of our Anti-HT presentations we connected with an organization who required additional information; through this connection and information the front-line service worker was equipped to successfully assist a survivor to exit HT and provide the needed wrap around supports.

Community Capacity

The ONWA is the sponsoring agency for the Thunder Bay Urban Aboriginal Advisory Committee (UAAC). The UAAC is comprised of urban Indigenous service agencies, community members, government partners and community partners who service the collective interest of urban Indigenous people in Thunder Bay. The Community Capacity program seeks to engage,

identify, and address the local priorities and needs of the Thunder Bay Indigenous community, through partnership development, community engagement and collaboration.

The Community Capacity Program focused on the development, coordination, collaboration, and delivery of initiatives that supported community safety. From leading Community Partner Approach to COVID-19 teleconferences to supporting the development of a Community Emergency Food Security Plan (CEFSP) for Thunder Bay and assisting in the vaccine rollout for the urban Indigenous community.

The program built capacity within the community through the hosting of a virtual workshop which focused on negotiation and advocacy skills; and by facilitating a Strategic Planning Session with the UAAC that will guide the Thunder Bay Urban Aboriginal Strategy for the coming years.

Ending Violence Against Indigenous Women Breaking Free From Family Violence (BFFV)

The BFFV program continued to provide vital supports for Indigenous women and their families who were experiencing violence and involvement with Child Welfare. Although the BFFV Programs faced new challenges to service delivery, services continued at all ten (10) program sites, which are in different communities across the province by using technology to meet, collaborate and network. The programs continued to support Indigenous women and their families in a culturally rooted, holistic way; parents received the supports they needed, children were prevented from being apprehended, and more families stayed together as a direct result of this program.

Family unification and reunification was nurtured through trauma-informed, holistic supportive services that continued to help Indigenous women on their healing journey realize their

inner strength and reclaim their leadership roles in their families. The BFFV program Family Support Workers provided creative and innovative services designed to be responsive to the emerging needs of Indigenous women and their families throughout the province which improved outcomes for over 2,100 families.

A mother and her four children learned about the effects of family violence while rebuilding their lives. The supports she received from the BFFV Program and from the BFFV Family Support Worker assisted in reunifying her family.

57

Families were reunified

112

Children were reunified with their families



BFFV Sunset Womens Aboriginal Circle (above)



BFFV ISVA - She Is Strong Boxing Program (above)

BFFV Niagara Chapter Native Women - Healing Blanket Hybrid Workshop (below)



What did you find most helpful about the BFFV Program and Worker?

"...Closing my Family Services File. Allowing my family to grow"

"BFFV worker was able to provide a safe space for a family to have access visits. Without the support of the BFFV worker this family would not have had the opportunity to spend valuable time together and start the reunification process." - *Georgian Bay Native Women's Association*

"Sharing and making something so very special with my children."



BFFV Georgian Bay Native Womens Association - Beading & Sharing Circle

1K

Sexual Violence related presentations

1,170 participants at 74 presentations

99

Sexual Violence Awareness Workshops

99 participants at 8 workshops

24

Partnerships developed with Indigenous agencies provincially

“I was able to meet other people that have similar stories to mine, this program helped me feel comfortable in my own body.”

“After I was sexually assaulted, I was losing myself and didn’t want to leave the house but then my mom introduced me to She is Strong boxing and I feel safer leaving the house and I love boxing!! I hope it continues!! “

Indigenous Sexual Violence Awareness Training (ISVA)

The ISVA program builds capacity through education, presentations, and engagements to address the needs of the community in relation to sexual violence, sexual assault, community awareness, and prevention. A special emphasis on engaging youth and teens was created throughout the year through these workshops in person and online with a variety of schools and agencies throughout Ontario.

The She is Wise Boxing program is geared to Indigenous girls between the ages of 11-18 and partnered with the Canadian Women in Sport and the Leading Edge Gym. The program is designed to increase participants motivation to be physically active in a safe, barrier free, includes and engaging sport, while increasing their awareness of sexual violence. This program supported 40 Indigenous girls over a three-month period.

ONWA’s 6th Annual Strong Hands Stop Violence Annual Poetry Night was held to support the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. The event was attended by 74 participants using a hybrid approach for the first time. Local poets,

storytellers, writers, musicians and spoken word artists helped raise awareness of violence against Indigenous women and girls. ONWA paid tribute to and honoured powerful storyteller, prolific writer, poet, and activist Lee Maracle this year. The event also featured local poets Samantha Martin-Bird, Benjamin Murray, and a musical performance by Keith Secola. Province wide submissions were gathered for ONWA’s annual publication of the Strong Hands Stop Violence Poetry Book, which highlights poetry written by Indigenous women.

Health

Indigenous Diabetes Education

The Indigenous Diabetes Education program aims to build capacity to service providers by providing tools, presentations, and workshops to increase awareness of diabetes. The Indigenous Diabetes Education Program in partnership with the Registered Nursing Association of Ontario (RNAO) has identified ONWA as an Indigenous Cohort Best Practice Spotlight organization. The Indigenous Diabetes Education Program will contribute to and launch the best practice of promoting a smoking cessation best practice guideline.



1K

1,447 participants

**Large Awareness Campaign:
Mocc Walk**

470

Workshops Participants

Community Members and Service Providers at 24 workshops

9

Traditional Activities

5

Regional Meetings

230

Food Care Kits provided

The 2021 Mocc Walk challenge had 1447 participants and tracked 1,206,539 minutes of exercise activity. Due to the pandemic, the MOCC WALK Challenge approach shifted utilizing a social distancing approach. Participants were encouraged to get active inside the house, gardening and within their own personal spaces due to pandemic restrictions. Weekly competitions encouraging creative ways to get active were promoted with positive feedback from participants. The 2021 Mocc walk challenge introduced the first annual employee MOCC walk challenge to encourage physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well being of our staff.

Indigenous Women's Health

The Indigenous Women's Health Program (IWHP) focuses on the prevention and awareness of Diabetes in Indigenous women and their families. The program has serviced 11,500 community members who have been supported by the IDWHP workers provincially. The Indigenous Women's Health workers in the three flowthrough sites offered 236 workshops focusing on traditional foods and medicines, foot care, diabetes information sharing circles, cooking and nutrition classes, land based healing activities as well as medicine wheel teachings addressing physical, spiritual and mental health improvement activities. This program is delivered through the Georgian Bay Native Women's Association, Niagara Chapter Native Women, and Sunset Women's Aboriginal Circle.

"I enjoyed the walking and noticed how much it is good for one's mental health."
- Mocc Walk Participant

"I absolutely loved this challenge. I forced myself to walk every morning and enjoyed it. I know I will continue walking. I am now going to use a calendar to mark my distances and times. My next goal is to see how far I walked all summer. I hope I can join this group next year."
- Mocc Walk Participant

"Since participating in the MOCC WALK, I have continued to be active and lost 30 lbs." - Mocc Walk Participant

Aboriginal Responsible Gambling Awareness

The Aboriginal Responsible Gambling Awareness program (ARGAP) provided ONWA's councils and chapters virtual presentations such as "The art of balance" and "Gaming: with the family". The presentations provided information on the signs of over usage, signs of problem gambling/gaming, personal self assessment to service providers and community members across Ontario.

The ARGAP program launched ONWA's own Legend of the Four Winds Story telling dice cube game provincially this year. The story cubes were created and produced by our ARGAP coordinator and marketing team. Over 300 dice games have been distributed to schools, community members, sites, and chapters across the province to help foster the natural storytelling ability of our Indigenous community. The ARGAP program hosted an Honouring Mother Earth Day Provincial Awareness Campaign which consisted of an Art Contest and series of art classes to support interested artists virtually. The winning art piece was featured on Earth Day T-shirts and reusable bags which were distributed to communities across Ontario for Honouring Mother Earth Day festivities.

Ska-Be

The Ska-Be program provides supports to urban Indigenous elders and Indigenous people with disabilities to continue to live independently that is reflective of their needs and culture. The program focuses on using a culturally based, holistic wellness approach within an intersectional and wrap-around circle of care to address mental health, chronic disease and illness, and disability needs. This program complements existing services the individual is

1. Nevada Anwhatin



**Honouring
Mother
Earth Art
Contest
Winners**



2. Ravindra Subramanya



3. Mackenzie
Shawanamash

already accessing. By placing a high priority on culture, tradition and identity, the program offers high quality services, advocacy, and culturally safe care to community members.

The Ska-Be program has serviced 105 community members across Ontario with 4310 supports provided by Ska-Be workers located at the Georgian Bay Native Women's Association, Niagara Chapter Native Women and at the Thunder Bay ONWA site.

"Over the past several months, having the Ska-be worker involved with our family has been such a positive experience. As part of the 'Sandwich generation,' I have found myself to be a single mom, taking care of five children and two ageing parents for the past several years. I have been utterly exhausted trying to do it all. The Ska-be worker has been able to alleviate so much of my stress by helping out my family in a caring and respectful way. In the past my parents have been reluctant to receive help outside of the family and the Ska-be worker has been able to discuss options with them, implement outside services and take a lot of the stress off of me. It's so nice to receive her phone calls and have someone ask me how I am doing. I am so grateful for her help!" - K.B



Youth Life Promotion-Mentorship

The Youth Life Promotion Mentorship program supports Indigenous Youth ages 12- 29 years. Indigenous youth are supported in their emotional well-being through holistic, culturally-grounded supports that instill a sense of belonging, purpose, meaning and hope. Indigenous youth identity and positive role development are key features of this program. The youth work closely with a Mentor as they learn and experience new skills to help support themselves as well as support their community. Key goals of the Youth Mentorship program is to support building leadership skills, strengthening relationships and gaining knowledge of ceremony. The Youth Life Promotion program also offers youth land-based activities that promote strong cultural identity and traditional knowledge practices.

In partnership with the School of Indigenous Learning a 4-day youth retreat was held and had 18 in person participants.

509

Participants
at 20 workshops



Indigenous Youth Anti-Bullying Art Contest

1. Tisha Duncan (left)
2. Cassie Major (bottom left)
3. Grace Funnell (bottom right)

“Everyone that I have spoken to are so kind!”

“The Ska-be worker has been great, she’s helped me take care of the wound on my foot, she’s advocated for me and asked questions for me when my bill was wrong. She’s also helped set me up with services for meals and picked up several medical items and such for me and my family. Also, groceries!” - B.B





“Proud to be part of this community.”

Indigenous Women’s Leadership

Building Indigenous Women’s Leadership (BIWL)

The program provides capacity-building opportunities to support organizational development and skills through workshops, information sharing, event briefings, funding, networking, and membership initiatives. The focus of this program for the past year has been on strengthening the relationship with membership. This year we also welcomed Minwaashin Lodge as a Chapter.

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) Supporting Families

The MMIWG Supporting Families Program supports families of MMIWG through group-based healing activities, or direct family supports for initiatives that promote healing and honour loved ones. The MMIWG Supporting Families program provided direct supports to 15 family members. This program led the Legacy of Hope - Waniskahtan Exhibit August 3-13, 2021, event, which was a community collaboration with Lakehead University Indigenous Initiatives Office, Thunder Bay National Indigenous Peoples Day Committee, and Intercity Shopping Centre. Over 500 people viewed the exhibit to learn about Missing and murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

The MMIWG Supporting Families program also provided education and training to the Thunder Bay Police Services on Intimate Partner Violence and participated in the TBPS Training Curriculum Development Committee to ensure that Indigenous ‘women’s experience and voice remain a priority with police services.

118

Participants
at 3 campaigns

75

Participants
at 3 Regional Activities/Meetings

70

Participants
at 11 workshops

“Continue to send membership your amazing events so we can participate & build / strengthen relationships!”

“Excellent work!
So glad to be a part of ONWA!”



Medicine Lines of Womanhood – MMIWG Commemorative Project

Survivors and family members were supported to create two pieces of art in their chosen medium to commemorate their experience or their loved one. The two groups met weekly for eight-week sessions. The art as healing project was led by art-based facilitators. The group was supported in each session by both the facilitators, elders and ONWA staff. Through this project, project participants could create their art pieces while healing through sharing stories of their loss, their experiences and their loved one. Participants acknowledge the need to share who their loved one was, not how media represented them. Art as healing from grief and trauma was this project’s key focus, and participants were appreciative of the project focus.

“I’m really appreciative to ONWA, our group and the artists for allowing me to participate in this project. It is helping me on my healing journey.”

“This group is my lifeline. It has contributed to my health and wellness.”

“I appreciate every one of you women. Thank you for giving me a safe space to feel. I need it.”

Social Service Relief Fund – 3 (SSRF3)

The Social Service Relief Fund Phase 3 is funding that flowed to our Chapter organizations and our community services portfolio to support housing supports such as rent supplements, rent and utility deposits, arrears support, and transitional housing payments.

This program was delivered through eight ONWA Chapters and through the ONWA Community Services Portfolio. Eight Chapters were able to provide this funding to Indigenous women and their families to support their housing needs.

Through a provincial delivery approach, the SSRF Funds helped 95 households access utility, food and other household needs and 66 individuals/family units were supported with housing arrears and first and last month’s rent. This program was essential in keeping Indigenous and their families housed.



Policy, Research, & Evaluation

Provincial Highlights Ontario Indigenous Children and Youth Strategy (OICYS)

ONWA continues to participate at the Metis, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous (MIUI) Service Provider Technical Table led by the Ministry of Children, Communities, and Social Services (MCCSS). Throughout the fiscal year, several topics of engagement were brought to the table, such as child welfare redesign, youth justice, early intervention and special needs modernization, out-of-home care settings for Indigenous children and youth victims of human trafficking, and the pediatric death review committee – child welfare. The collective advocacy efforts from the partners at the MIUI Technical Table led to the development and passing of a key piece of legislation. Specifically, Schedule 3 of Bill 84 amends the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017 to better support Indigenous families in accessing services from prevention-focused Indigenous service providers.

ONWA lead engagements with Indigenous women on child welfare redesign with our membership, staff, and women and children in community with lived/living experience in the system. These engagements will result in concrete recommendations for ONWA to inform policy and legislative changes through the Child Welfare Redesign Strategy. The first engagement session was completed at ONWA's 50th Annual General Assembly and a report titled 2021 Annual General Assembly:

Caucus Sessions Report that was submitted in March 2022. Key takeaways from the report were that a re-imagined child welfare system must account for specific regional considerations to address community-specific needs and center and prioritize the voices and expertise of Indigenous women and their families impacted by the system.

Best Practice Spotlight Organization (BPSO)

ONWA has successfully completed our designation as a Best Practice Spotlight Organization (BPSO) with the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario (RNAO). ONWA is the first Indigenous social services organization to undertake designation with the RNAO as a BPSO.



ONWA Submission to the Ontario Anti-Racism Strategy Review

The Anti-Racism Act, 2017 requires the Ontario government to develop and maintain a provincial Anti-Racism Strategic Plan that is reviewed every 5 years led by the Ontario Anti-Racism Directorate. ONWA held two engagement sessions with its membership in February 2022 as part of the strategic review. The engagements sought advice and recommendations from Indigenous women, community members, and service providers on racism against Indigenous women at individual and systemic levels, as well as within public systems (justice, education, and child welfare), how their communities are working to address racism, and how they would advise policy changes within legislation among other questions.

ONWA created a written submission and provided recommendations informed by our membership's perspectives with a primary focus on ONWA's 8 key safety issues.

Indigenous Women's Advisory Council (IWAC)

ONWA's Executive Director is currently the co-chair of the Indigenous Women's Advisory Council (IWAC). IWAC was convened in 2020 to provide input and guidance on violence prevention actions and the development of Ontario's response to the Final Report of the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. In working collaboratively with Ontario, ONWA provided input into the development of Ontario's Pathways to Safety, as well as the progress report. Due to the council's success and the numerous priorities identified within the Pathways to Safety report, the council's mandate will be extended beyond 2022 to focus on strategy implementation and instituting accountability measures.

National Highlights Indigenous Women's Safety Table (IWST)

The Indigenous Women's Safety Table continued to meet to discuss Indigenous women's safety and considering how best to proceed with holding the federal government accountable to Indigenous women's safety within the current political context. This table is focused on employing the collective expertise of all membership to provide direction and guidance on what Indigenous women's safety looks like from the perspectives of Indigenous women. Ensuring the collective voices of Indigenous women are incorporated into policies and discussions on issues that impact their lives is paramount to meaningful systemic changes for Indigenous women and girls.



International Highlights Defending Mother Earth: Indigenous Women at the Forefront of Action

ONWA in partnership with the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIA-W-ICREF) organized and facilitated an NGO CSW66 Forum parallel event featuring Indigenous water protectors and land defenders who work to protect the earth from environmental degradation. Using the international platform of CSW66, the focus of the parallel event was to highlight the disproportionate and interconnected impacts of environmental degradation on Indigenous women and their communities, but also on Indigenous women environmental defenders' ongoing tactics and strategies for resistance and remediation. Panelists included Winona LaDuke, Sheila Watt-Cloutier, Judy DaSilva, Autumn Peltier, and Dr. Pamela Palmater, who through their discussion participated in knowledge-sharing to strengthen global and local feminist solidarity and support for Indigenous women environmental defenders. Discussion addressed the impacts of environmental degradation and destruction and the connection to the violations of Indigenous women's human rights, strategies for resisting environmental destruction and its interconnected impacts, and recommendations for actions individuals and organizations can engage with at the political level.

CEDAW Submission

ONWA provided input to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) on their General Recommendation on the Rights of Indigenous Women and Girls. ONWA's submission articulated that an Indigenous Gender-Based Analysis must be applied and responsive to Indigenous women's lived experiences. ONWA also recommended strengthened language to the Committee that affirmed Indigenous women's rights to self-representation.

Marketing & Communications (MarCom)

Working in partnership with all ONWA portfolios, MarCom connects the brand with people, places, experiences, and events. MarCom helps promote Indigenous women's voices across communities by telling their stories and supporting Indigenous women to reclaim their inherent role as community leaders.

During the 2021-22 fiscal year, MarCom assisted ONWA with:

- Creation and deployment of the 13 Grandmother Moon Calendar and 2 editions of the She Is Wise magazine
- Celebration of 50 years of ONWA, including development of the ONWA documentary, logo, and campaign
- Delivery of the 50th Annual General Assembly and Leadership Conference as a hybrid (in-person/online) event
- Provincial and national response to MMIWG National Action Plan
- Expansion and refinement of ONWA's website, including an easier to navigate Program Calendar
- Open Letter campaign regarding *Immediate action needed to address the discovery of mass graves of Indigenous children*
- Multiple livestream events and promotion on ONWA's website and social media
- and more!

705M

705,238,019
Overall Media Reach (approx.)

119K

119,037
Website Total Reach

3.3M

3,312,777
Social Media Total Reach

702M

701,806,205
News (Television, Radio, etc.)
Total Reach



119,037 Total Traffic

85,739 Unique Visitor

Sessions by Device

51.9% Mobile

46.2% Desktop

01.9% Tablet



1,007 Posts

2,309 Followers

122,449 Discovery/
Reach



3,115 Followers

1,397 New Followers

4,168 Visits

170,769 Impressions

5,280 Reactions

4,774 Clicks

1,076 Shares



13,291 Page Followers

24,208 Page Views

2,270,759 Post Reach
(Organic and Paid)

12,772 Likes

14,954 Shares

40,916 Reactions



1,119 Tweets

5,404 Followers

1,114 New Followers' Visits

38,786 Profile Visits

748,800 Impressions

422 Mentions

Human Resources



Our Workforce

Most of our workforce continues to represent the ONWA continued to grow throughout 2021-2022 with the addition of the Mindimooeyh Health Clinic. Most of our workforce continues to represent the community members we serve with **61% of our workforce being Indigenous peoples and 56% of these being Indigenous woman:**

DEMOGRAPHICS



■ Indigenous Women ■ Indigenous Men ■ Non-Indigenous

Our Recruitment

To ensure maximum reach, we utilize several different mediums to attract candidates to our open vacancies. These include radio, newspaper advertisements, a wide variety of social media platforms and different publications throughout the province. When compared to the previous year, ONWA experienced an **increase in job posting views, of 145%!**

Our Wellness

Employee wellness has heightened the last couple of years since the pandemic began. Working from home can be stressful to some workers as it is difficult to balance a multitude of priorities. Overall health and wellness of our workforce is paramount to ensuring our employees are balancing their work and their home lives. ONWA offers a very comprehensive benefits program which is inclusive of immediate online access to health care practitioners, mental health counsellors and an online pharmacy. Our benefits program works to support our employees and their families, in their time of need. We provide immediate access to the Employee Assistance Program for all new hires with no waiting period.



Represented in **four regions**: East, South, West, and North



21 Ontario Communities

11 Indigenous Women's Organizations (Chapters)

10 Service Delivery Sites (ONWA Sites)

21 Councils

Governing Board

ONWA's leadership is based on a policy governing board of Directors comprising of twelve Indigenous women, including four youth Director positions to ensure the mentorship and voices of our future generation is reflective in our work. All the Directors are elected from ONWA's membership. A regional Grandmothers' Council, who are non-voting members of the board, provide advisory and mentorship support to the Board of Directors.

The current Board of Director's listing can be found at: www.onwa.ca/about

ONTARIO NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Empowering Indigenous Women Throughout Ontario

A Voice for Indigenous Women's Issues



www.onwa.ca



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